

(1) Afghanistan...

that there is a need for a similar consensus at the regional level. The US envoy said that the peace process requires harmony and coordination.

Khalilzad reiterated that discussions have been held with regional countries and they have been assured that their role will be considered in the Afghan peace process. (Tolo news)

(2) Abdullah Blames ...

The official also called for unity between the Afghan government, political figures and civil society in engaging with the Taliban.

He said that neither the Afghan people nor the international community want return of Taliban era which he described as a "dark hell." Abdullah suggested leaders of the country should be elected by the people in any post-peace deal. (Monitoring Desk)

(3) Germany ...

"After the seventh round of [US-Taliban talks], the friendly countries will play their role for the launch of an intra-Afghan dialogue," Mr. Zaman said.

At the same time, Markus Potzel Germany's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan emphasized that a good opportunity has been created for peace in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Potzel said the European Union is committed to helping end the war in Afghanistan.

"Our focus centers for an intra-Afghan dialogue and I want to help the U.S. peace efforts," he said.

This comes as the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad will hold the seventh round of direct talks with the Taliban negotiators in Qatar in the near future. (ATN)

(4) Another ...

Niamatullah, a resident of Ghazni city, the provincial capital, told Pajhwok that different parts of the Bala-i-Hesar had been in a dilapidated condition over the past few years because no one paid attention.

He said when Ghazni was named as Islamic civilization center in 2013 and a lot of donations were made, but then officials stole the money.

Mohammad Arif Noori, the governor's spokesman, said the issue had been shared with the Information and Culture Ministry.

On the other hand, acting information and culture minister Hassina Safi said construction works on Ghazni historical places had not been done well.

She said efforts were underway to restart reconstruction works in Ghazni as soon as possible. (Pajhwok)

(5) National ...

On the last day of the holy month of Ramadhan, a suicide bomber riding a bicycle hit a government vehicle carrying the staff member of the commission.

As a result, the commission lost five of its employees and another eleven were wounded. (ATN)

(6) IECC to Register ...

tasked with registering complaints at 35 voter registration centres across the country. The panel would address the objections after the registration process.

He called on all countrymen to share complaints against in case of any kind of corruption in the the registration process on a form that would be available in provincial offices.

Ilyasi said the IEC and IECC would hold another conference tomorrow to address concerns about the small number of voter registration centres.

About the lack of public awareness of the voter registration process, he said efforts were underway to deal with the issue at the earliest pos-

sible. (Pajhwok)

(7) Afghanistan Becomes ...

He says that overall more than 30,000 combatants and non-combatants were killed in Afghanistan during the past year.

According to a United Nations report in February, 2018 was the most violent year for civilians. The report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan said that more than 11,000 Afghan civilians were killed and wounded in attacks by militants, airstrikes, military sweeps, and fighting between the Afghan forces and militants.

"Violence has consistently increased in Afghanistan during the past five or six years," Iqbal noted. He said the defeat of the Islamic State militants in Syria and the reduction of violence in the country to a few pockets have significantly decreased the overall violence in Syria.

"This is why Syria has moved to the second place and it is being replaced by Afghanistan as the least peaceful country in our index," he said.

The Global Peace Index 2019 says the world has become "very slightly" more peaceful for the first time in five years. But conflicts in the Middle East, a rise in terrorism, and increasing numbers of refugees still make it "considerably less peaceful now" than a decade ago.

The war in Afghanistan is considered one of the most intractable conflicts in the world. It began after a violent coup by communist military officers in 1978. Since then, more than 1 million Afghans are estimated to have been killed and injured. The various phases of the war have also displaced more than 10 million Afghans. (RFE/RL)

(8) Key Taliban ...

to a Taliban attack on a number of security forces outposts in Dai Chopan district in the southern province on Tuesday.

He said that Taliban's designated district governor for Mizan and Dai Chopan was also killed in the operation.

He said that at least six security force members were also killed in the operation, but they managed to push back the Taliban from the area.

Taliban has claimed that they have captured the Dai Chopan district.

This comes after Acting Defense Minister, Assadullah Khalid, visited southern Zabul province on June 6 and said that those parts of the country which have fallen to the Taliban will be retaken by Afghan forces in the near future as they have stepped up their operations against the militants.

Khalid said the Taliban did not have any achievement in their spring offensive. (Tolo news)

(9) 9 Uprising...

uprising group members suffered the casualties during Taliban attack on a security post in Dung Qala area of the district on Tuesday night.

He said the security post was first fallen to the Taliban but was recaptured by Afghan forces in a retaliatory action in which he said three insurgents were killed and four others wounded.

Meanwhile, Naqibullah Tufan, commander of the uprising group in the area, confirmed one of their security post was lost to the Taliban and nine of their members were killed in the incident.

However, Abdul Karim Yurish, Faryab police spokesman, said that five Taliban fighters and one uprising group member were killed in last night's attack in Garziwan. He said that seven Taliban and one security personnel were injured in the incident. (Pajhwok)

(10) Saudi-Led...

been continuously accused of war

crimes for striking civilian targets and for leading a blockade that has put millions of Yemenis on the brink of famine.

The coalition denied targeting civilians on purpose and has conducted its own investigations into some of the airstrikes. It also pinned the blame on rebels who sought cover among civilians. (RT)

(11) Astronomers Claim...

Though that opportunity may be some 18 years away, Howes wondered out loud if there was any chance of returning Snoop to Earth. He admitted, though, that the scientific value would be minimal and the cost astronomical. (RT)

(12) India's Quest...

things even more complicated for New Delhi, Beijing and Islamabad have been engaging in quite close military cooperation, even jointly producing military hardware - namely the JF-17 Thunder fighter jet (known in China as FC-1 Xiaolong).

It's quite unsurprising, given the tense security situation and vast population, that India has the second largest standing army in the world - nearly 1.5 million active personnel. While the size of the country's military is exceeded only by China's 2 million, it operates a lot of quite dated hardware.

Among it, MiG-21 Bison fighter jets - while modernized, the planes date back to the 1960s - as well as ageing MiG-29s. While such planes are still quite capable, modern Sino-Pakistani jets, US-made F-16s, operated by Pakistan, and China's cutting-edge Chengdu J-20 stealth fighters are definitely a threat for them. Meanwhile, New Delhi has around 250 modern Russian Su-30 multirole fighters - it's a capable force, arguably surpassing the potential of the whole Pakistani aircraft combined, yet it is no match for the vast and growing Chinese fleet.

With regards to land units, the situation appears to be brighter, the country has a very large amount of modern T-90 Russian main battle tanks, as well as older, Soviet-era models. Its neighbors, however, have large tank armies as well, with Pakistan having a big arsenal of Chinese copies of Soviet-era armor, as well as modern jointly produced Sino-Pakistani vehicles. China, for its part, is well beyond merely copying foreign designs, and is actively re-arming all the branches of its military with modern, domestically-built hardware. (RT)

(13) US Threats...

continue to maintain the same attitude and stance," he said. Washington, meanwhile, has started to tighten the screws. The Pentagon confirmed on Monday that Turkish pilots have been banned from training on F-35s at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona.

The US has been pressuring Turkey for months to abandon its deal with Russia to purchase S-400 systems. Ankara has countered the demand by suggesting the creation of a joint working group to alleviate any possible US security concerns. Ankara has invested \$1.25 billion into the trillion-dollar F-35 program, producing parts of the fuselage, landing gear, and cockpit displays for the jets. Turkey has ordered 100 units of the high-tech aircraft and says that it still expects the planes to be delivered.

According to Shanahan, Turkey has until July 31 to change course if it wants to remain in the F-35 program. (RT)

(14) Britain Sets...

Theresa May said. In one of her final acts before she steps down next month, she said Britain "must lead the world to a cleaner, greener form of growth". "Standing by is not an option," she

added.

- 'A strong signal' -

Britain's top advisory body on climate change this year said the net zero target could be achieved within a budget of 1.0-2.0 percent of gross domestic product by 2050. But the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) added that the deadline would require the rapid rollout of new policies such as making all new cars and vans electric by 2035 and quadrupling low-carbon electricity production.

"This step will send a strong signal to other countries to follow suit," said John Gummer, the committee's chief.

Carolyn Fairbairn, head of the Confederation of British Industry big business lobby, said companies were "squarely behind" the commitment but she urged the government to come up with long-term policies to decarbonise the economy.

The deadline would put Britain on track to fully meet its commitments under The Paris Agreement, under which countries have pledged to keep the global average temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius.

If replicated across the world and coupled with near-term emissions reductions, there would be a greater than 50 percent chance of limiting the temperature increases to just 1.5 degrees Celsius -- the "safe" upper limit identified by the UN's International Panel on Climate Change last October, the CCC said.

Other EU countries have also pencilled in various emission reduction deadlines, although none have been adopted into law. (AFP)

(15) Australian Opposition...

Australian newspaper that Australia was an outlier among its Five Eyes intelligence-sharing partners United States, Britain, Canada and New Zealand in not having such oversight.

There was also a "concern that only leaks embarrassing the government merit investigation while those that benefit the government do not," Keneally wrote.

Dr. Rebecca Ananian-Welsh, a senior lecturer at the University of Queensland Law School, said Australia went from having no counterterrorism laws before the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks in the U.S. to having more than any other country in the world, with more than 60 new pieces of legislation and amendments.

There had been no counterbalancing laws to uphold human rights or press freedom, she said. And Australia didn't have enshrined rights like the U.S. First Amendment guarantee of free speech.

"We just lack a rights culture," Ananian-Welsh said. "It's there, but it's very weak and has no teeth."

She said taking hard stances on national security had been politically popular and the new laws gave certain government agencies broad powers to do everything from searching metadata without a warrant to coopting telecommunication workers to crack encryption technology.

She said the raids appeared designed to intimidate potential whistleblowers, sources, and journalists.

But she was heartened by the call for an inquiry, she said, and thought that outcry over the raids may help swing the political pendulum back toward protecting press freedoms. (AP)

(16) N. Korea Sends ...

presidential official said. Lee, the wife of late South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, died on Monday at 97. Her funeral proceedings are continuing through Friday. The contact between the Korean

officials at Panmunjom came at a delicate time in relations.

North Korea has significantly reduced its dialogue and engagement with South Korea since February, when a high-stakes nuclear summit between Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump collapsed over disagreements on exchanging sanctions relief for disarmament. Negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea have also been at a standstill and Kim has declared that the Trump administration has until the end of the year to offer mutually acceptable terms for a deal to salvage the negotiations.

Kim Yo Jong, who is believed to be her brother's closest confidant, did not convey a separate message from him for South Korean President Moon Jae-in, said Chung Eui-yong, Moon's national security director who met her at Panmunjom. Chung said he didn't carry a message from Moon either.

"Today, the South and North focused on cherishing memories and mourning (Lee)," Chung said.

South Korea's Unification Ministry, which deals with inter-Korean affairs, released photos showing Kim Yo Jong smiling and talking with South Korean officials at a building on the northern side of Panmunjom and handling Chung a red folder that contained her brother's condolence letter.

In the letter, Kim Jong Un credited Lee and her husband with laying the foundation for the Koreans to take steps toward unification, peace and prosperity. The wreath sent by Kim was decorated with black ribbons with golden letters saying, "In memory of the late Lee Hee-ho" and "Kim Jong Un." (AP)

(17) Catalan Separatists...

indicated that around 47 percent of people in Catalonia favour independence for the wealthy north-eastern region.

Nine of the defendants are charged with rebellion, including Catalonia's former vice-president Oriol Junqueras, who risks 25 years in jail.

The three other defendants face lesser charges of disobedience and misuse of public funds.

All 12 are expected to take the stand one last time on Wednesday. Catalan pro-independence protesters in Barcelona called a demonstration to mark the end of the trial. "This trial is a democratic anomaly," said one, 25-year-old student Abel Vila, carrying a red and yellow pro-independence flag.

- 'Prosecuted for my ideas' - Some of the key figures in Catalonia's independence drive have been behind bars for more than a year and a half pending the trial. Catalonia's former president Carles Puigdemont, the main protagonist of the secession attempt, was conspicuously absent after he fled Spain.

In Puigdemont's absence, his former deputy Junqueras, 50, has been the lead focus of the case.

"I am being prosecuted for my ideas and not for my actions," Junqueras told the court in February. Prosecutors retorted that the defendants were on trial for having broken the law, not for their opinions.

Despite being in detention, Junqueras was elected as a lawmaker in the national parliament in an April general election along with four other fellow defendants. They were later suspended from parliament. (AFP)

(18) Bulgaria Ready...

Macedonia hopes to become NATO's 30th member next year and also expects shortly to secure a date to start EU accession talks following a deal with Greece to change its name from Macedonia. Athens had previously blocked the ex-Yugoslav republic's efforts to join the two organizations. (Reuters)